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NJMC and Bergen County Announce Flood Control Partnership

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission and Bergen County have partnered to expedite a major flood control project on Route 17 in Rutherford and East Rutherford, a move that exemplifies each organization's commitment to shared services, Commission and County officials said today.

"The County administration has really stepped up to serve the people and we are grateful for their assistance," said Joseph Doria, Chairman of the NJMC and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. "This joint effort will make life substantially easier for the thousands of motorists who drive Route 17 in Southern Bergen County and for the area business owners and residents who dread every rainfall in this flood-prone area."

"For far too long, motorists and residents on Route 17 had to cope with street closures, traffic jams, and aggravation every time a storm hit," said Bergen County Executive Dennis McNerney. "By working together instead of assessing blame, we'll be able to quickly and cost-effectively mitigate this flooding problem."

The County is deploying its Mosquito Control Division to assist the NJMC in clearing out two man-made ditches in Rutherford and East Rutherford. Clearing the 1.5-mile long ditches is a vital component to the project, which also includes the repair and replacement of several tidegates and culverts in Rutherford and East Rutherford and the upgrading and expansion of the stormwater system beneath Route 17.

The Mosquito Division will provide the excavation equipment and operators for the ditch

clean-up, saving the NJMC approximately \$1 million. The ditches extend from Route 17 near Union Avenue and Highland Cross to Berry's Creek and Berry's Creek Canal.

The project is a prime example of the benefits of shared services, which the NJMC and Bergen County have stressed as crucial to efficient and cost-effective government, said Robert Ceberio, Executive Director of the NJMC. The Commission has a shared equipment pool and provides several planning services to District municipalities at no charge in areas including affordable housing and solar energy.

Bergen County has been a leader in sharing services, especially public works equipment and resources. The County allows towns to borrow its jet-vac sewer truck when needed and has allowed members of its Mosquito Control Division to work with municipalities in finding innovative solutions to alleviating flooding along the multitude of rivers within the county.

"As strong proponents of shared services, it makes perfect sense for the NJMC and Bergen County to join together on a project that benefits all of our constituents," Ceberio said. "We hope this endeavor will encourage other organizations to explore the advantages of working together."

Work on the project's first phase, which includes the replacement and repair of several tide gates and culverts in Rutherford and East Rutherford, will begin in June. The drainage-ditch work is scheduled to begin in late summer. The project's third phase, involving additional repairs, will be performed by the New Jersey Department of Transportation later this year.

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